In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A process for the preparation of citalopram characterized in that: (a) 5-cyanophthalide is treated with a mixture of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide and 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide and (b) the obtained mixture is treated with an organic acid, an inorganic acid, a phosphine, or with a labile ester forming group and a base.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the use of from 1.8 to 2.0 moles of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide, for each mole of 5-cyanophthalide.

3. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the use of from 1.09 to 1.2 moles of 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide, for each mole of 5-cyanophthalide.

4. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that from 1.7 to 1.6 moles of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide, are used for each mole of 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide.

5. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide is a bromide.

6. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide is a chloride.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that said acid has a pK comprised from 0 to 3.

8. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that said acid has a pK comprised from 2 to 3.

9. (Original) A process according to claim 7, characterized by the fact that said acid is orto-phosphoric acid.

10. (Original) A process according to claim 7, characterized by the fact that the acid is used in a concentration comprised from 55 to 95% by weight, preferably in concentration of about 85% by weight.

11. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized in that the phosphine is thriphenylphosphine.

12. (Original) A process according claim 1, characterized in that the labile ester forming group is selected from the halide or the anhydride of an organic acid.

13. (Original) A process according to claim 12, characterized in that the halide of the organic acid is the halide of methanesulfonic, p-toluenesulfonic, trifluoroacetic or trifluoromethanesulfonic acid.

14. (Original) A process according to claim 13, characterized in that the halide is the chloride.

15. (Original) A process according to claim 12, characterized in that base is selected from triethylamine, dimethylaniline or pyridine.

16. (Original) A process according claim 1, characterized by the fact that the process is carried out in an organic polar aprotic solvent.

17. (Original) A process according to claim 16, characterized by the fact that the process is carried out in from 1.0 to 1.6 litres of solvent, for each mole of 5-cyanophthalide.

18. (Original) A process according to claim 16, characterized by the fact that the solvent is selected from tetrahydrofuran and/or toluene.

19. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (a) is carried out at –20÷+20°C.

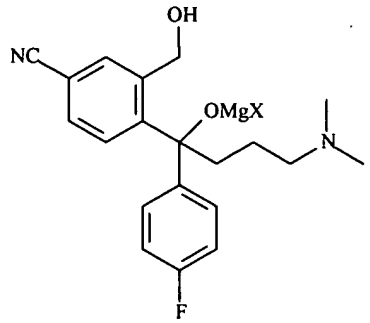
20. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (a) is carried out at —10÷0°C.

21. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (b) is carried out at -10÷+20°C.

22. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (b) is carried out at 0÷+10°C.

23. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact of being carried out without isolating the intermediate products.

24. (Original) Compound of formula:



where X is an halogen, preferably chlorine or bromine.

~~22~~.25. (Currently Amended) Use of a compound according to claim 24 as an intermediate in the preparation of citalopram.